

St. Petersburg, Fla.
23 February 1949

Dear Norm:

This morning, between about 10:10 to 10:25, I had what I consider a peculiar visitation, to say the least. A gentleman, identifying himself as Joseph Centry Pickling, Lt. Cdr., U.S. Naval Reserve, came to the door of our house and stated asking my mother about my radio set-up.

Since the tower has been up, we have had a lot of people come to the door, asking if I am a "ham", apparently hoping to contact friends or relatives in the north. Mom thought he was another one of those people, and when he persisted in questioning, Mom told him that she could not tell him anything about my work. He finally flashed (and I mean just that) a Naval Intelligence identification card, and asked to see me.

I worked last last night, so was just getting out of bed. He asked to speak with me "in confidence", and again flashed his identification card. He started asking questions about my work, equipment, etc. I explained that I could not give him this information, because of security regulations. He told me that he had seen my name listed in last year's city directory, giving my employer as CIG, and said that he thought this was a breach in security. I maintained that it was not, as many contractors, radio supply houses, etc., know who my employer is, and through them, I guess, a lot of other people know, too. However, I further said that I could not give out any information about my work.

He assumed that I am a monitor, since I do not have any transmitting equipment. At this point in the conversation, I was very surprised when Mr. Pickling started talking about last year's personal property tax. It turned out that he is also the Personal Property Appraiser for the City of St. Petersburg, and it seems that he is not satisfied that most of the equipment is Government owned. He said that he is going to find out about me and my work through (apparently) Naval Intelligence.

I do not feel that Mr. Pickling handled himself properly, if he really is with Naval Intelligence, inasmuch as he was trying to gain information from me for the city of St. Petersburg while acting as a Government agent. Only when I became confused as to his questions about the equipment and taxes, and started a little questioning of my own, did he identify himself also as the appraiser.

I would like you to pass all this information on to the proper people in CIA, and if there is any investigation of this fellow, I would very much like to know the outcome. I asked for his business cards, which I am enclosing.

All the best,

/s/ Tommy

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